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Rep. Katie Edwards Applauds Action on Smart Justice Legislation
HB 159 Wins Approval In Florida House Criminal Justice Subcommittee

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – State Rep. Katie Edwards (D-Plantation) applauded today's action of the Florida House Criminal Justice Subcommittee, which approved significant changes that she has proposed to Florida's mandatory-minimum sentencing laws to give judges broader discretion in cases involving possession of prescription drugs.

House Bill 159 by Representative Edwards drew subcommittee approval on a bipartisan 8-5 vote and now heads to the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee for further consideration. The bill, which takes a so-called "smart justice" approach to reforming sentencing laws, aims to protect public safety by allowing judges alternative sanctions to certain low-level nonviolent offenders so that scarce public resources can be devoted to offenders who represent a threat to public safety.

"Today's action is an important step in achieving smart justice in Florida," said Edwards. "I believe that judges should be afforded discretion when sentencing prescription drug addicts. Incarceration without drug treatment is not a cost-effective solution to Florida's prescription drug epidemic."

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